



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/913,317	08/10/2001	Maximiliano Zenti	35106/GM/1p	8491
7590	03/10/2006		EXAMINER	
Modiano & Associati Via Meravigli, 16 Milan, 20123 ITALY			PARSLEY, DAVID J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3643	

DATE MAILED: 03/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/913,317	Applicant(s) ZENTI, MAXIMILIANO	
	Examiner David J. Parsley	Art Unit 3643	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 August 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 43-83 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 43-83 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 08 November 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Detailed Action

Amendment

1. This office action is in response to applicant's amendment dated 8-26-04 and this action is final.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 62, 64-65, 69 and 73 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,834,072 to Rack.

Referring to claim 62, Rack discloses a method of preparing a plant cultivation, comprising, preparing a seeding bed – see figure 5, and introducing seeds therein – see column 4 line 68, dividing the seeding bed into sods, cohesion treatment allowing for the sod to maintain a geometric shape – see figure 5, laying the sod and moistening the sod before or after laying with regular watering after laying, a nondestructive drying step performed on the sod, wherein the cohesion treatment includes the sod being mixed with a bonding agent in a chamber – see for example columns 1-6.

Art Unit: 3643

Referring to claim 64, Rack discloses the preparation of the seeding bed comprises dosage of the seeds and the layer of glue and the mixing thereof – see figure 5 and columns 4-6.

Referring to claim 65, Rack further discloses the preparation of a seeding bed is obtained by depositing successive layers of various components – see figure 5.

Referring to claim 69, Rack discloses the introduction of seeds occurs by depositing a layer of seeds – see for example figure 5 and column 4 line 68.

Referring to claim 73, Rack discloses a sod for cultivating plants, comprising a seeded seeding bed – see figure 5, including a fertilizer and wrapped or at least held together by a suitable organic bonding agent so as to maintain its shape – see columns 2-6.

Claims 81-83 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,584,790 to Gaughen.

Referring to claim 81, Gaughen discloses a method of preparing a plant cultivation comprising the steps of preparing a seed bed – see figures 2-3 and column 3 lines 26-59, dividing the seed bed into sods by pressing the seeding bed – see at 74 and 86, introducing seeds in the sods – see at 82, after the sods have been defined by the pressing of the seed bed – at 72,74 – see figure 2, laying the sod and moistening the sod before or after laying and regular watering after laying – see for example column 3 lines 26-59.

Referring to claim 82, Gaughen discloses a step of depositing a layer of adhesive agent on a surface of the sods where seeds have been introduced – see at 54 or 80 in figure 2.

Referring to claim 83, Gaughen discloses the step of preparing the seeding bed comprises the step of mixing the sods with an adhesive agent – see at 54 or 80 in figure 2.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 43, 45-46, 50-51, and 53-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gaughen in view of Rack.

Referring to claim 43, Gaughen discloses a method of preparing a plant cultivation, particularly a lawn, comprising, also in a different time sequence, the following operating steps: preparing a seeding bed and introducing seeds therein – see figure 1 and column 2 lines 55-65 and column 3 lines 35-49, dividing the seeding bed into sods – 18, cohesion treatment whereby the resulting sod is not brittle makes it possible to maintain a geometric shape and allows proper handling until the laying step is completed – see figure 1 and column 2 lines 55-65 and column 3 lines 35-49, laying the sod – 19, moistening the sod before or after laying and regular watering after laying – see column 3 lines 32-35 and column 5 lines 61-68 and column 6 lines 1-2, and the cohesion treatment is performed by laying a layer of adhesive on the outer surface of the sod, the adhesive being a natural adhesive - see for example column 2 lines 55-65 and columns 3-5.

Gaughen does not disclose laying a layer of adhesive directly on the entire outer surface of the sod. Rack does disclose laying a layer of adhesive directly on the entire outer surface of the sod – see for example columns 1-5. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the device of Gaughen and add the laying of the adhesive directly over the entire

Art Unit: 3643

surface of the sod of Rack, so as to allow for the components comprising the sod to be securely held together.

Referring to claim 45, Gaughen as modified Rack further discloses the preparation of the seeding bed comprises dosage of the seeds and the layer of glue and the mixing thereof – see figure 5 and columns 4-6 of Rack.

Referring to claims 46, Gaughen as modified by Rack further discloses the preparation of a seeding bed is obtained by depositing successive layers of various components – see figures 1-7 and column 3 lines 60-68, column 4 lines 1-68 and column 5 lines 1-68 of Gaughen.

Referring to claim 50, Gaughen as modified by Rack further discloses the introduction of seeds is carried out by depositing a layer of seeds – see column 3 lines 35-49 of Gaughen.

Referring to claim 51, Gaughen as modified by Rack further discloses the drying is nondestructive and reduces the percentage of humidity in the seeding bed to the point at which seed germination is no longer possible and tends to preserve the possibility of rapid future revival of microorganisms activity without degrading the natural and chemical organic substances present in the seeding bed – see column 3 lines 50-53 and column 5 lines 31-48 of Gaughen.

Referring to claim 53, Gaughen as modified by Rack further discloses the drying is provided by means of low-temperature heat sources and by air change – see column 5 lines 31-48 of Gaughen.

Referring to claim 54, Gaughen as modified by Rack further discloses a sod for cultivating plants, comprising a seeded seeding bed – 100 including a fertilizer – see column 2 lines 55-68 and column 6 lines 9-23 and wrapped or at least held together by a suitable organic

Art Unit: 3643

bonding agent so as to maintain its shape – see column 3 lines 35-49, column 5 lines 10-24, and column 24-32 of Gaughen.

Claims 44, 47, 49, 63, 66 and 68 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gaughen and Gaughen as modified by Kazemzadeh as applied to claims 43 and 62 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,786,550 to McFarland et al.

Referring to claims 44 and 63, Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose wherein after drying the sod is packaged in a suitable package for its preservation, storage, and transport, preferably under vacuum. McFarland et al. does disclose wherein after drying the sod is packaged in a suitable package for its preservation, storage, and transport, preferably under vacuum – see column 4 lines 13-17 and column 6 lines 59-63. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the packaging the sod in a package for storage and transport of McFarland et al., so as to make the method profitable in that the sod can be shipped and sold since it is packaged for transport.

Referring to claims 47 and 66, Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose wherein the division into sods occurs by molding the mix in a template, die or by extrusion in the chosen sod shape. McFarland et al. does disclose wherein the division into sods occurs by molding the mix by extrusion in the chosen sod shape – see figures 1-10 and column 3 lines 53-68 and column 4 lines 1-17. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the step of dividing into sods occurring by extrusion in the chosen sod shape of McFarland et

Art Unit: 3643

al., so as to ensure that the sod maintains the desired shape in that the process is automated and easily controllable.

Referring to claims 49 and 68, Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose wherein the introduction of seeds is carried out by implantation of a seeding machine. McFarland et al. does disclose wherein the introduction of seeds is carried out by implantation of a seeding machine – 62,64,66 – see figures 1-10 and column 3 lines 53-68. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the introduction of seeds by a seeding machine of McFarland et al., so as to make the process quicker and more efficient in that the laying of seeds is automated and thus allows for quicker laying of the seeds and for more seeds to be placed on the sod.

Claims 48 and 67 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack as applied to claims 43 and 62 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,063,385 to Friedberg. Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose wherein the division into sods occurs by die-cutting. Friedberg does disclose the division of sods occurs by die-cutting – see figures 1-2 and column 2 lines 1-68 and column 3 lines 1-16. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the division into sods by die-cutting of Friedberg, so as to make the cutting operation quicker and easier since it is automated, therefore making the process more efficient.

Claims 52 and 71 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rack as modified by Gaughen and Gaughen as modified by Rack as applied to claims 51 and 70, and

Art Unit: 3643

further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,109,395 to Huang. Rack as modified by Gaughen and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose wherein the drying is performed by exposure in a ventilated greenhouse. Huang does disclose wherein the drying is performed by exposure in a ventilated greenhouse – see figures 1-4 and columns 2-4. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack as modified by Gaughen and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the drying step performed in a ventilated greenhouse of Huang, so as to protect the sod during the process in that inside the greenhouse the sod is protected from any outside elements that could cause it harm.

Claims 70 and 72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rack as applied to claim 62 above, and further in view of Gaughen.

Referring to claim 70, Rack does not disclose the drying reduces the percentage of humidity in the seeding bed to the point at which seed germination is no longer possible and tends to preserve the possibility of rapid future revival of microorganisms activity without degrading the natural and chemical organic substances present in the seeding bed. Gaughen does disclose the drying is nondestructive and reduces the percentage of humidity in the seeding bed to the point at which seed germination is no longer possible and tends to preserve the possibility of rapid future revival of microorganisms activity without degrading the natural and chemical organic substances present in the seeding bed – see column 3 lines 50-53 and column 5 lines 31-48. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the device of Rack and add the nondestructive drying of Gaughen, so as to allow for the device to be stronger and more durable over time.

Art Unit: 3643

Referring to claim 72, Rack as modified by Gaughen further discloses the drying is provided by means of low-temperature heat sources and by air change – see column 5 lines 31-48 of Gaughen.

Claims 55-56 and 74-75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack as applied to claims 54 and 73 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,088,957 to Kazemzadeh.

Referring to claims 55 and 74, Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose wherein the bonding agent is biodegradable. Kazemzadeh does disclose the bonding agent is biodegradable – see column 4 lines 28-59. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the bonding agent being biodegradable of Kazemzadeh, so as to make the process more efficient in that after the sod is placed on the ground, the bonding agent degrades and thus does not prevent water from reaching the seeds, thus making the process more effective and efficient.

Referring to claims 56 and 75, Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack do not disclose the bonding agent comprises at least one colloidal substance. Kazemzadeh does disclose the bonding agent comprises at least one colloidal substance – see column 4 lines 28-59 of. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack and Gaughen as modified by Rack and add the bonding agent comprising at least one colloidal substance of Kazemzadeh, so as to make the process more efficient in that after the sod is placed on the ground, the bonding agent degrades and thus does not prevent water from reaching the seeds, thus making the process more effective and efficient.

Art Unit: 3643

Claims 57-59 and 76-78 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh or Gaughen as modified by Rack and Kazemzadeh as applied to claims 56 and 75 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,414,776 to Ball.

Referring to claims 57 and 76, Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh or Gaughen as modified by Rack and Kazemzadeh do not disclose the bonding agent comprises glue of vegetable or animal origin. Ball does disclose the bonding agent comprises glue of vegetable or animal origin – see column 2 lines 60-68. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the method of preparing a seeding bed of Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh or Gaughen as modified by Rack and Kazemzadeh and add the bonding agent comprising glue of animal or vegetable origin of Ball, so as to make the process more efficient in that after the sod is placed on the ground, the bonding agent degrades and thus does not prevent water from reaching the seeds, thus making the process more effective and efficient.

Referring to claims 58 and 77, Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh and Ball or Gaughen as modified by Rack and Kazemzadeh and Ball further discloses the seeding bed comprises soil, which includes mineral substances and at least one organic substance – see column 6 lines 9-23 of Gaughen and columns 3-6 of Rack.

Referring to claims 59 and 78, Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh and Ball or Gaughen as modified by Rack and Kazemzadeh and Ball further discloses the organic substance comprises one or more fertilizers – see column 6 lines 9-23 of Gaughen and columns 3-6 of Rack.

Claims 60-61 and 79-80 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh and Ball and Gaughen as modified by Rack, Kazemzadeh and Ball as applied to claims 59 and 78 above, and further in view of McFarland et al.

Referring to claims 60 and 79, Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh and Ball and Gaughen as modified by Rack, Kazemzadeh and Ball do not disclose the sod comprising at least one selective herbicide, which hinders the germination and growth of plants which are different from and antagonists of those whose growth is sought. McFarland et al. does disclose the sod comprising at least one selective herbicide which hinders the germination and growth of plants which are different from and antagonists of those whose growth is sought – see column 3 lines 19-23 and column 6 lines 43-52. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to take the device of Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh and Ball and Gaughen as modified by Rack, Kazemzadeh and Ball and add the herbicide of McFarland et al., so as to make the device more effective in that the sod can grow without being limited or harmed by other types of plants growing in the sod.

Referring to claims 61 and 80 Rack as modified by Kazemzadeh, Ball and McFarland and Gaughen as modified by Rack, Kazemzadeh Ball and McFarland et al. further discloses the sod having a geometric shape which makes it possible to cover continuously the surface to be revegetated – see column 2 lines 66-68 and column 3 lines 54-59 of Gaughen and figure 5 of Rack which shows the sod covers the surface to be revegetated and it is inherent that the sod has a geometric shape since that is necessary for the sod to continuously cover the surface to be revegetated.

Response to Arguments

Art Unit: 3643

4. Regarding claims 43 and 62, the Rack reference US 3834072 discloses laying an adhesive layer on the entire outer surface of the sod as seen in column 3 lines 34-57 where the polyurethane bonding agent is mixed with the entire material and further the retaining layer is disposed on the entire upper layer of the sod. As seen above in paragraph 3 of this office action the Rack reference is not used to disclose the seeds being provided inside the substrate and therefore these arguments are moot. Further, applicant's invention may use only one adhesive agent, however the claimed invention does not indicate the quantity of adhesive agents used and therefore this argument is moot. Further, as seen in figure 5, the adhesive layer – at N,S, is disposed directly on the soil – at B as seen in figure 5 of Rack.

Regarding claim 43, in response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

Art Unit: 3643

the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

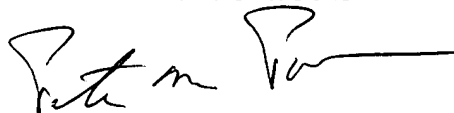
6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David J. Parsley whose telephone number is (571) 272-6890. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8am to 4pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Poon can be reached on (571) 272-6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



David Parsley
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3643



PETER M. POON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

3/6/06